

Message Text

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60/22

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 IO-13 MCT-01

SY-05 NSC-05 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 TRSE-00 /072 W

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R 010900Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1783

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0920

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 0920 VICE MRN 09P)

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

SUBJ: EAIR, PFOR, QA

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY AT DOHQ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

REF: STATE 212490

1. GOQ IS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER TERRORIST THREATS AT AIRPORT AND HAS EXPENDED LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO ASSURE PROTECTION. POLICE AUTHORITIES HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THEY WILL TAKE HARD LINE AGAINST TERRORISTS OR HIJACKERS. POLICE STATE THAT THEY WILL NOT RPT NOT EXPORT A TERRORIST PROBLEM; DEAD OR ALIVE, THE TERRORISTS WILL NOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

2. ARRIVING PASSENGERS ARE NOT PHYSICALLY SEARCHED. HOWEVER, ALL HAND-HELD LUGGAGE AND SUITCASES FROM THE CARGO SECTION ARE RUN THROUGH FLUOROSCOPES.

3. DEPARTING PASSENGERS ARE PROVIDED WITH PHYSICAL SEARCHES AND WALKED THROUGH METAL DETECTORS. THEIR HAND LUGGAGE AND LUGGAGE FOR CARGO SECTION ARE RUN THROUGH FLUOROSCOPES. PASSENGERS ARE THEN ADMITTED INTO WAITING LOUNGE, WHICH ALSO SERVICES AS TRANSIT LOUNGE. TRANSIT PASSENGERS ENTER SAME LOUNGE FROM THE TARMAC. UNSCREENED NON-PASSENGERS ARE NOT RPT NOT PERMITTED ACCESS TO THE LOUNGE. EVEN EMBASSY EMPLOYEES WITH IDENTITY
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CARDS ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES IN GAINING ACCESS TO LOUNGE. THE

AIRPORT TERMINAL IS GUARDED BY AS MANY AS TEN SHARPSHOOTERS STATIONED ON THE TERMINAL ROOF. THESE MEN ARE ARMED WITH RIFLES BEARING INFRARED TELESCOPIC LENSES FOR NIGHTTIME OPERATION. EMBASSY BELIEVES THESE MEN HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO SHOOT IF AN ARMED HIJACKING TAKES PLACE.

5. THE TERMINAL AND SURROUNDING AREA ARE MONITORED BY ROTATABLE CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERAS PROVIDING 24-HOUR COVERAGE OF THE TERMINAL AND SURROUNDING AREA. THE TV SCREENS ARE MONITORED FROM A COMMAND ROOM AT THE AIRPORT. GUARDS ARE, OF COURSE, STATIONED AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERMINAL BUILDING.

6. COMMENT: AIRPORT SECURITY IS, BY AND LARGE, GOOD. SECURITY AT THE TRANSIT LOUNGE IS EXCELLENT. HOWEVER, VARIABLE QUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL GUARDS IS SERIOUS FLAW WHICH MAKES THE SYSTEM CONSIDERABLY LESS EFFECTIVE IN PRACTICE THAN IT LOOKS ON PAPER.

7. COMMANDANT OF POLICE HAS VISITED FAA SECURITY OFFICERS IN U.S. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT FAA OFFICERS WERE IMPRESSED BY VERBAL DESCRIPTION DOHA AIRPORT SECURITY. COMMANDANT, HOWEVER, ADMITS THAT SECURITY PROGRAM IS ABOUT TWO YEARS FROM COMPLETION. HE WOULD WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FROM ANY FAA SECURITY OFFICER WHO COULD VISIT DOHA. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE DOHA AIRPORT SECURITY WARRANTS SPECIAL VISIT, BUT IF FAA SECURITY OFFICER COULD SWING BY DOHA NEXT TIME OFFICER IS IN AREA, HIS SUGGESTIONS WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.

8. GOQ HAS NOT RATIFIED HAGUE AND MONTREAL CONVENTIONS. PLEASE FORWARD TEXTS FOR EMBASSY'S USE IN DISCUSSING RATIFICATION.
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